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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION EXPANDING FIELD FORCE
TO HANDLE NEW DUTIES UNDER NATIONAL DEFENSE EMERGENCY

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Effective policing of communications under the coordinated national defense program necessitates the Federal Communications Commission moving to augment its field force with additional fixed monitoring stations as well as new bases of operation for mobile units. Under this expansion program, which begins immediately, several hundred inspectors and other experts will be employed.

The additional force is needed to maintain a comprehensive 24-hour surveillance of all communication channels, inclusive of broadcast and other radio transmission. Present radio monitoring facilities will be supplemented with ten primary long-range direction-finder stations. These stations determine the bearings of unauthorized or otherwise suspicious communications. The mobile equipment, which includes direction finding apparatus, traces the origin of such transmissions.

In addition to increased monitoring duties, the field division will be required to watch radiotelegraph and radiotelephone circuits for superfluous signals, record same, and translate foreign language broadcast material. It must also make certain of the citizenship of several hundred thousand persons now charged with the responsibility of communications, as well as of their immediate families. This figure covers about 100,000 licensed radio operators, including amateurs; a like number of cable and wire operators, and other employees such as those of broadcast and other radio stations. It is necessary to know more about the private communications employees who daily handle official dispatches and other Government messages.

Another emergency task will be to guard against the possible misuse of electrical apparatus, including diathermy devices (now employed in many thousand offices of physicians), as transmitters in a manner which might jeopardize the nation's security. Still another undertaking will be to keep tab on possible use of transmitters which have been manufactured but not sold or licensed for authorized communication purposes.

The Commission now operates seven monitoring stations, in various parts of the country, which are largely devoted to making routine measurements of frequencies and determining the quality of emissions, as well as spotting interference. In the course of such work, they observe unlicensed operation incidentally. However, these monitoring stations as now manned and equipped could not cope with the additional work contemplated.

Congress recently authorized a new monitoring station for Massachusetts, but this is to relocate and improve the existing one. The new bases for mobile operation are being established at strategic points throughout the United States and its possessions.

Routine functions of the field division, which now numbers less than 200 persons, embrace inspection of all classes of stations licensed by the Commission, and the issuance of licenses; investigation of complaints of interference and illegal operation; conducting field strength surveys and analyzing signal characteristics; inspecting ship and other marine radio stations, and general regulatory supervision.

During the last fiscal year the Commission investigated more than one thousand complaints of unlicensed operation, and the number of cases pressing for investigation is growing under the present situation. Experience gained in past investigation of unlicensed stations, particularly in the use of the ultra high frequencies, has demonstrated the advantage of an inter-radio

communication system for the purpose of synchronizing operations and exchanging intelligence. The prospective new primary monitoring stations and mobile units will be equipped with transmitters and receivers so as to be able to more quickly run down unlawful operation.

Since the Commission is under Civil Service, the additional personnel will come from those rolls.